

1609/387
R E M A R K S

ON THE

P O S T S C R I P T

OF

DR. HALLIFAX'S PREFACE

TO THE

S E R M O N S

OF THE

R E V. D R. O G D E N.

CUM TABULIS ANIMUM CENSORIS SUMET HONESTI.

HOMI

— DAT LOCUM VEL VITIOMISSIMIS
ORATORIBUS.

CICERO.

C A M B R I D G E,

P R I N T E D B Y F. H O B S O N.

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[M.DCC.LXXX.]

REMARKS

ON THE

POSTSCRIPT



DR. HALL'S PREFACE

TO THE

SERMONS

OF THE

REV. DR. OGDEN

ORATORICAL
— THE LECTURE AND THE SERMON —
COMPARISON BETWEEN THE TWO
CICERO

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A Preface by the REV. DR. HALLI-
FAX to a new edition of Sermons
by the late DR. OGDEN, has induced
me to lay before the public my thoughts
on some of the particulars which are
there considered. The marks of aspe-
rity which appear in this performance I
attribute to the zeal of an Editor and
Friend. I admire the ingenuity of the
learned Advocate, and heartily join with
him in the esteem he expresses for his
favourite Author; although I am not
blind to his faults, any more than to
those of his Critic, or Accuser. The de-
sign of the Postscript may, for any thing
I know, be the best that can be. But I
must freely confess I dislike its ten-
dency, and dread the use that may be
made of it. For to what doth it tend
in the main, but to mislead the younger
part of the University in a matter of
great consequence to their improve-
ment;

ment; and by the (1) Sanction of his authority, to confirm a practice, which ought to be exploded?

Whether Dr. O. has, or has not, descended to the practice of ordinary Writers in using the scriptures, at times, as a Cover for barrenness of thought, and poverty of language;—whether he is, or is not, at *times, obscure, flat, coarse,* and (2) *disjointed*—intelligent readers will judge for themselves. Concerning Mr. M.'s *motives* for *supposing* such faults, as they are entirely foreign to the merits of the case, and as I cannot see into the

(1) The word Sanction is used by Mr. Burke as a Verb, but I do not know whether that will justify Mr. M. for adopting it; or whether Dr. H.'s severity in *this* instance may not be deserved. For he who ventures to criticize others on the subject of language, should be particularly careful about his own expressions.

(2) I do not confide in my own opinions, or wish to obtrude them upon any man; much less do I mean to be severe, or injurious. But I have often *fancied*, that Dr. O's style is not unlike to a *continued staccato*, the effects of which we perceive upon the harp. Now the periods of a writer should *flow*—and, like the notes of a fine piece of music, be melted one into another.



the breast of any man, I pretend not to judge. Of *this* I am confident—that the *general sentiment*, which his Remark was meant to impress, is well founded and important. I only wish he had pursued it farther, and had pointed out more examples of the same un-scholar-like practice. Had he found any dearth of these in his own University, *another* (*absit dicto invidia !*) could have furnished him in great abundance. The fact indeed requires no proof, but the question requires to be rightly stated, And the question is this,—“ Whether
 “ addresses to an audience of Students
 “ and Scholars should not be framed
 “ in a manner and spirit somewhat different from that of compositions intended for common or mixt congregations?” If it is clear that they ought, as Dr. H. acknowledges, Why then, let me ask, is this obvious and necessary distinction so strangely neglected? And why are Scholars themselves so ready to take the alarm when

any member of their own Republic but attempts to revive it? Mr. M. has properly observed, that discourses addressed to the Universities are to be considered as a sort of Exercises. They are specimens of the Preacher's *own* progress in his proper science, and being offered to the younger part, who are candidates for the Ministry, should serve as models for *their* imitation. Now, what can be more unsuitable to such an Audience, than *vague* and *arbitrary* quotations of Scripture, which serve to cherish an indolent disposition in one part of the Audience, and must necessarily create disgust in the other—in all, indeed, who have ever turned their attention to subjects of Theology? I know that some writers have absurdly endeavoured to resolve all religion into *Taste*. Yet the extreme of those, who would banish all taste from religion, is not much better. This cannot be done with safety, even in instructing the people at large. Unless some regard is paid

to

to the directing of their *feelings*; unless their *devotion* is *conducted*, as well as raised, the soundest doctrine may turn to poison instead of nourishment. But, alas! even among the Clergy themselves there are strong traces of a Spiritual Quixotism: and unless I am much mis-informed, a specious, scenical kind of piety begins to be patronized in a quarter, where one would least expect to see piety of any sort, were it not the offspring of *Disimulation*. Be this as it may, next to downright *Errors*, a *wrong Taste* in religion is the thing to be dreaded. It is true, when temper and constitution are the chief cause of this malady, the cure must be very difficult. But to *cherish* it in a place of education is the greatest of all possible perversions.

In the *quoting* of *Scripture*, two (3) things are chiefly to be attended to.

One

(3) Dr. H. has discovered a *third* use of this practice. After having smartly reprimanded Mr. M. for the temerity of

One is, the *meaning* of the sacred writers themselves. The other is, the Confirmation of the Argument, on which the Preacher insists. When the main business of the writer is, to explain and interpret the passages quoted, the greater the number of them is, if that business be well executed, the greater of course must be his merit. And in *this* view, the Sermons of Dr. SAMUEL CLARKE are among the best that are extant, tho' greatly inferior to many, if considered as mere Compositions. For instances of the best manner of introducing and applying

of censuring his favourite author, we are presented with Dr. O.'s *Character* in the words of Scripture. "A workman that needeth not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." Or, as another, "Apollon, eloquent and mighty in the Scriptures, who mightily convinced his hearers, and that publicly, shewing by the Scriptures, that Jesus was Christ."

Now, it seems to me, that this is the very manner of quoting the Scriptures which Mr. M. has lamented; and, without meaning to give the least offence to Dr. Hallifax, I sincerely think it has disgraced them more than all the ridicule of professed Infidels. I do not assign my reasons, because that would suppose the reader to have no feeling.

plying Scripture on the whole, I would refer the young Student in Divinity to the writings of Dr. SECKER, and Dr. HURD. But as other authors of great merit have so often *failed* in this particular; and as young minds are so very susceptible of tender impressions, whether true or false; I would warn him to be for ever on his guard against the *Sorcery of Sounds*—a species of Magic, which still subsists in its full force, and which I will venture to prophesy, no improvements in science can ever subdue. The effects of this Inchantment were never more largely experienced, than in the reign of the FIRST CHARLES; or seen more fully than in the uses which were then made of certain theological terms,—I mean those of *Predestination*, and *Justification by Faith*. These were explained and understood in a sense, subversive of all morality. The crude, absurd ideas annexed to these, and some other terms or phrases of Scripture, were the chief food of that religious phrenzy, which

which ended in the subversion of all order in society. The great change in the face of affairs at the Restoration, although it removed this phrenzy, produced another, of a complexion very different indeed, but not less fatal to morals and religion. For now the *Saints* were succeeded by *Wits*, *Free-Thinkers*, and *Sceptics*; who, like the former, were still led by *sounds*. Yet these shallow dupes of their own boasted reason were able, it seems, to cheat others out of their faith and salvation by the tricks of language, and the shifts of sophistry. The open contempt of Revelation, and utter disregard of those motives which it sets before us, made it necessary now to unfold and explain that plan of Providence. BUTLER, SECKER, and others, who so nobly defended Christianity at large, and the scheme of Redemption in particular, strongly insisted on the danger of neglecting the duties arising from *this* part of religion. But what is much to be lamented, the *frequent*, tho' necessary

necessary introduction even of *such* topics has betrayed many respectable writers into the Cant and Jargon of Methodism. Now, when we reflect, that such able and excellent men as PASCAL and FENELON became such zealous proselytes to the most foolish of all fanatical Orders;—that in our own country and times, the seeds of Hutchinsonianism have been sown so plentifully, and have thriven so largely, in a Soil, which was assigned to the MUSES to cultivate; when we reflect, that several persons of the first fortune, and some too of the first distinction, are the declared Patrons of the most despicable *Cast* that ever disgraced a civilized nation;—is there not some cause to be alarmed at any disposition to favour the tenets (I ask pardon, they have none) or humour the temper of such Visionaries?—But these Persons have the Art of *moving an Audience*, and Popularity in Preaching depends on *that* circumstance more than on any other. Here then the secret is out.

C

No,

No, it will be said, for why may not an Audience be moved by a manly and instructive Eloquence, as well as by affected Phraseology, and empty Declamation?—I allow that Dr. H. himself is a proof that they may. Still the latter is by far the more easy and compendious way to win that Applause, which too many Preachers chiefly aim at, and to which no one, perhaps, can be quite indifferent. The men of sense compose a very slender tribe; and as the suffrages of such, however honourable, may be very ineffectual; he must be firm indeed, who, in times like these, never descends from the dignity of a Scholar, never sacrifices truth to the reigning taste; but nobly scorns those Arts, which captivate the many.—Dr. H. as much as he may despise them in his heart, is not unacquainted with their *Use* and *Efficacy*; and Dr. O. it is certain, did not wholly neglect them. This, perhaps, was the true source of some faults in his writings which Mr. M.

M. has noticed, (if indeed they are really such) and it is *possible* at least, that the *motive* (supposed to be a mean Envy, or base Jealousy) might be an apprehension of some danger arising from the Doctor's Eminence, as a Scholar and a Writer. For if corruptions of any kind are introduced, or authorized by great examples, they are commonly productive of more, and greater. Faults in style, if considered merely in *themselves*, furnish proper Employment for the Verbal Critic. But if they are of such a nature as to proceed from, and to produce, Faults in *Sentiment*; if they lead to *Errors in Conduct*, it is the Business of the Philosopher and Divine, without Respect of *Persons*, to detect and discredit them. A true taste in letters is of more consequence than some may suppose. Let but *this* be lost; let it only be depraved to a certain degree, — then may we look for the arrival of that blessed æra, when Piety and Nonsense shall be re-united. We boast of our progress

progress in polite literature, at the very time that we are taking such large strides in our return to Barbarism. Indeed, considering the changes which have happened in former periods, and in other nations, we need not wonder much at any revolutions (I speak of the literary kind) which may happen in our own. Perhaps there is no great choice between false tenets and false tastes, in whatever Communion. But I own the Enthusiasm of Popery would be more to my mind than that of Methodism. Bold falsehoods and avowed absurdities, splendidly dressed and speciously recommended, have a more majestic appearance in my eye, than propositions devoid of all sense or meaning, cloathed in language too low for criticism.

To speak my sentiments freely. The Writer, who, in this profligate age, should devise any new and effectual method for promoting the interests of Piety, would deserve a statue. But I am sure Dr. H. will agree with me, that,

that he who, to promote his own interest, should aid and abet that growing Fanaticism, which, like the Idolatry of old, hath erected its standard in HIGH PLACES, though possibly he might gain a Mitre, would deserve an Anathema.

F I N I S.

that he who, to promote his own inter-
est, should not let that growing
Tannation, which is the history of
old, half-civilized, and in Hion
Pacars, though it might gain
a Mine, would deliver an Anathema.



FINIS